



OFFICES OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

MEMORANDUM

Timothy L. Firestine
Chief Administrative Officer

March 12, 2008

TO: Phil Andrews, Chair Public Safety Committee

FROM: Timothy L. Firestine, Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Responses to Questions regarding Creation of a Public Safety Headquarters and the County Property Use Study

Thank you for your memorandum dated December 31, 2007. This memorandum is provided in response to the numerous questions you posed about the creation of a Public Safety Headquarters, relocation of the Public Safety Training Academy and generally about the County's Property Use Study. As staff indicated to the Public Safety Committee and the County Council, the Property Use Study was prepared to determine the feasibility of continued use and investment in several existing County facilities versus relocation of several facilities and leveraging the value of certain County land to offset the costs of acquiring new sites and new facilities.

The County Executive has several long range important objectives for the County and the study was undertaken expressly to examine from a macro perspective the feasibility of moving and expanding existing uses to different locations that would provide the County with better longterm solutions for public facility needs.

The study was undertaken with several underlying principles and objectives including:

- We are faced with aging facilities that require extensive investment of funds to meet our needs. With the age of some facilities, we must weigh the extent of the required investment against the long-term ability of facilities to satisfy current and future County needs.
- The facilities in the study were located at their current sites decades ago. We need to look at the location of existing facilities and determine if the current site makes sense given surrounding uses, or could the County direct the property to a better use from both a fiscal and a land planning perspective.
- Some uses such as police and fire and rescue make sense to consolidate in a public safety campus. Co-location will result in efficiencies of operations and space requirements.

- The County has a heavy operating budget burden for leased sites with various functions separated from their departments. Uses have been identified that could be moved from leased sites to reduce the County's operating budget burden for such space and consolidate the use with its department.
- Identify sites to receive uses from the County Service Park to implement the County's master plan for that area.
- Take advantage of opportunities to acquire or use sites that are at a point in the development cycle that they are suitable for acquisition.
- Look at existing County properties that have formerly been used for disposal purposes and may be suitable for some beneficial reuse.
- Leverage planned and necessary expenditures, avoided rent payments and land values to obtain and off-set costs of new sites and new facilities to serve County's long-term needs.

This comprehensive review, of which the initial study is only the beginning step, has highlighted several important considerations. With respect to the Public Service Training Academy ("PSTA"), which was located at its present location nearly 40 years ago, we believe that the planned investment of Twenty Four Million Dollars to overhaul the existing, aged facility would be better put to creating a new PSTA at a different location that can be used for 40 years to come. Even with the significant investment of funds at the current location, all of the PSTA needs cannot be satisfied at the existing site, and the site has little-to-no expansion capability thereby limiting the ability of the site to fully support the County's long-term needs for public safety training.

At the time the PSTA was sited at its current location, it was surrounded by farmland with few roads or other infrastructure to support it. Over the decades following its construction, major roads have sprung up and the County's prestigious and highly successful Life Sciences Center has been developed. Additionally, we have created the beginnings of a higher education enclave adjacent to the Life Sciences Center with the location of Johns Hopkins University Belward campus to the north of the PSTA site and the University System of Maryland Shady Grove campus to the south of the PSTA. Johns Hopkins has been actively engaged in looking at the overall area to determine how to enable the higher education uses that have begun in that area to grow into a world class research and education center.

The PSTA site is uniquely located to provide key uses to support the realization of a world class research and higher education campus and corridor in this area. Johns Hopkins Belward campus is subject to land use restrictions limiting the site to agricultural, academic, research and development, delivery of health and medical care and services, or related uses only. Similarly, covenants recorded against the properties comprising the Life Science Centers contain use restrictions limiting the kinds of uses that can go onto the Life Sciences site. There are on-going discussions about potential shifts to the Corridor Cities Transitway to better serve the Hopkins facilities and the Life Sciences Center that would position the PSTA site for transit-oriented development. The PSTA site can be utilized to help create a world class research and higher education community in which researchers and students can live near where they work.

Furthermore, as the County works to address the need for more receiving areas for transferrable development rights, the PSTA site could be designated a receiving area for such rights.

Another important objective is the County's need to create a new home for the Police Department. The Police Department's headquarters are crammed into an aging, undersized building in need of extensive work. Because of the lack of space at the current site, the Police Department has many of its functions dispersed to other locations in rented space. We need to move forward with a new police headquarters that will be large enough to meet its needs and consolidate its currently dispersed functions at a single location. We recognize that there is significant ongoing interaction between the Police Department, the Department of Fire and Rescue Services and Homeland Security. These public safety agencies would benefit from co-locating their administrative functions to facilitate their ongoing interaction and collaboration and enable the sharing of resources and support services. This co-location will be efficient operationally and will eliminate to some degree regular travel between agencies.

The County Council has gone through a comprehensive effort to adopt a plan for the County Service Park that would capitalize on the existing investment in mass transit by creating a transit oriented development community. Like the PSTA, the County Service Park was built decades ago and most of the facilities located at the County Service Park need large capital investment to be able to meet current needs. The Department of Liquor Control needs a larger warehouse with conditioned space. It is currently occupying leased space and the existing warehouse, which combined are inadequate to its needs. The EMOC is in need of expansion to handle existing fleet needs. Relocation of the uses at the County Service Park will enable the County to realize both the transit oriented development intended for the area and to address unmet needs.

It is important to keep in mind that we have consistently advised that the Property Use Study was directed to general feasibility. At this time, we are delving into the details of the Programs Of Requirements, reviewing needs and determining sequencing and space utilizations. With this background, we can respond to your questions generally and in a preliminary fashion. As our work progresses we will be able to provide more detailed and complete responses.

Overview

1. In addition to the PSTA, Police Headquarters, Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Department of Homeland Security Headquarters, and District 1 Station, the December 6 briefing identified the Board of Elections, and MCPS Food Services as moving to the GE Tech Park and Liquor Control as moving to the adjoining Finmarc property. Are there any other department or agency offices or functions that are proposed to move to these locations? Approximately how much un-programmed square footage remains available in the GE Tech Park building?

The GE Tech Park Building contains approximately 341,700 GSF. A public safety campus at the GE Tech Park Building will result in the building being fully utilized. The current administrative offices for both the Police Department and the Department of Fire and Rescue

Services will be located in the PSC. A number of Police and Fire functions will be consolidated from leased spaces into the GE site. For Police these include: Special Operations, False Alarm Reduction Unit, Fraud, Supply and Evidence Storage, Automated Traffic Enforcement Unit, and Internal Affairs. The District 1 Station will also be located in this building. For Fire these include: Fire Investigators and Bomb Squad. There is also a Police/Fire combined IT Training function moving from leased space.

Initial thinking had the Board of Elections locating in the GE Tech Park Building. While we continue to explore the feasibility of placing the Board of Elections in this building, calculation of the public safety uses results in the building being fully used for the public safety campus. Further work is needed to determine whether there are efficiencies to be realized due to elimination of redundancies in the programs of requirements for these uses. The programs of requirements are now being reviewed and coordinated to make such determinations. However, even with elimination of redundancies and space availability, the immediate needs of the Board of Elections may lead to it going elsewhere.

In addition to reviewing and fine-tuning PORs, we are beginning architectural massing studies. When this effort is concluded we will be able to more definitively provide precise space allocations.

2. *Please provide a timeline for implementation of each part of the overall County Property Use Study. Please indicate when an appropriation would be required and when there would be an expected pay-back to the County from the sale of land or the cancellation of leased space. At this time, the Committee is not requesting specific dollar amounts but rather identification of when funds will be needed in either the CIP or operating budgets.*

The timeline you have asked for is very important. There are numerous factors that will go into creation of a meaningful timeline for implementation of the County Property Use Study, including important siting decisions. Our consultant is currently preparing a sequencing/timeline analysis that will be completed in approximately two months.

We have begun discussions with the owners of the Finmarc Site and the GE Tech Park for acquisitions. We are currently taking an in-depth look at property values for these sites as well as for our property. In addition to the mentioned ongoing studies, we are continuing to look at properties to determine how best to achieve our objectives and we are beginning work with the community and area municipalities.

We will include appropriations, estimated paybacks and lease savings, by fiscal year, in the study and share it with the Council upon completion.

3. *The Committee agreed that many aspects of the entire proposal appear very good. However, the Committee is not yet convinced that the Executive's proposal requires the PSTA be moved or that the PSTA is incompatible with the Hopkins Vision 2030 plan. The Committee is requesting an alternate plan that would include most of the moves proposed in the study, but would leave the PSTA at its current site.*

We do not believe that the current PSTA site warrants the investment of Twenty-four Million Dollars projected for improvements when it will remain a crowded and compressed site that cannot meet our full current or future needs. Parking is inadequate, heavy vehicle training cannot be done at the site, and even with improvements to the basic building, the site will continue to have these problems.

The existing PSTA site is inefficient due to its having been developed in piecemeal fashion. To address all of the needs current and future for public safety training, the site would need to essentially be cleared. At that point it makes sense to relocate the PSTA as proposed.

As mentioned, we believe that given the surrounding development use of the current PSTA site for the PSTA is not in the best long range interests of the County. The PSTA has no relationship to life sciences, bio-medical research or higher education. Nor does it provide any support services whatsoever to providing a community in which researchers and students can live, shop or make use of neighborhood conveniences near their places of work and study. As our roads become increasingly congested, good planning that creates balance and niches where people can live near their places of work is important. Likewise creating opportunities for transit oriented development is important. An overall vision for this area that incorporates both mass transit and transit oriented development is a sound objective. As has been mentioned many parcels in this area have use restrictions that preclude them from providing the type of development that would support the broader needs of creating a live/work community. Under its current use the PSTA offers no opportunity to help advance a future vision for this area.

We have heard the Council's concerns about splitting the indoor and outdoor uses of the PSTA, and we are examining other potential locations that would keep the functions together and enable all of the County's immediate and future training needs to be met.

4. *What is the proposed timeframe for implementing the County Property Use Study? If the Council agrees to relocate the PSTA, how long would it take until public safety departments could move into the new classrooms and supporting facilities?*

This question relates to question number 2 above. The fact that the GE Tech Building and the Finmarc warehouse are existing improvements is helpful to our ability to achieve our objectives. The two broad critical path items for both of these sites to begin use of them are acquisition and renovations to address our specific needs. We do think that broadly speaking the acquisition and relocation can be achieved within a window of approximately 24 – 48 months. Until we have the sequencing/timeline analysis complete, we have only rough estimations of timelines. Additionally, we are looking at other sites for the PSTA, which may be available along the same timeline.

5. *In view of the current condition of the existing PSTA, would some interim improvements have to be made to continue operations there until the new facilities become available?*

We have compiled a list of interim improvements that would be needed to keep the PSTA functional and safe for a three to five year period. We have order-of-magnitude numbers of \$1,000,000 + for repairs and maintenance that include carpet, heating & air conditioning, security items, underground propane leaks, roof leaks, floor damage, door hardware, pot-holes in the parking lot, public address system, a lead abatement study on the firing range, as well as other items.

6. *How do public safety personnel commute to the PSTA now? Is public transportation available? Would there be any public transportation to the Poolesville site? Is there value in locating public safety training facilities near public transportation?*

There is minimal advantage to locating the PSTA near public transportation. Public Safety personnel commute in personal or assigned vehicles to the Training Academy. Public transportation is available but there are gaps in scheduling of transportation routes that make it incompatible with evening and weekend class hours for personnel. MCFRS firefighters are required to carry their 75lbs of turn-out gear, which is not conducive to use of public transportation. Public transit to Poolesville is limited due to demand; however, if it were deemed necessary and the ridership supported it, we could explore expanding the transit schedule to the Poolesville site.

7. *The current PSTA site is accessible from many major roads and is close to two exits for I-270. The GE Tech Park is mainly accessible from Route 28 only (as the other access would be through neighborhood roads.) Is this limited access appropriate for a public safety headquarters and training facility?*

The GE Tech Park site is less than 1.5 miles from the current PSTA. It has access to the same major arterials as the current location. We are in the process of procuring a traffic study. Therefore, we don't know how the traffic will impact the surrounding road system, but we suspect that the County uses of the GE Tech Park site will have less impact than that which would be permitted either based upon the current approved uses or under the recommended zoning for the property. Of course, when the PSTA was constructed, the major roads to which it now has access did not exist. Rather these roads have accompanied the extensive development that now defines the area.

8. *Given that the lake and front lawn account for a large part of the GE Tech Park site, how much of the site would be available for additional construction proposed in the County Property Use Study including the PSTA gym/indoor firing range, helipad, PS memorial, and possibly other training props?*

Generally, without building in front of the lake (which we know the City wants preserved), there is additional density of over 550,000 sf. available between the Finmarc and GE sites.

9. *What is the City of Gaithersburg's reaction to the general proposal for a substantial public safety presence at the GE Tech Park site, and to the proposed public safety training use in particular?*

The City of Gaithersburg has not opposed our proposed uses. Some officials voiced support, others cautious support and others were non-committal. In our presentation to the City Council, a number of questions were raised. Traffic and plan review top their list of concerns. We will try to address concerns as the process moves forward. Additionally, we have requested quarterly meetings with the Mayor and his staff to keep them informed and address questions or concerns that the City may have.

10. *What is the City of Gaithersburg's reaction to the proposal to relocate the Liquor Warehouse to the Finmarc site?*

The concerns were as described in response to the previous question.

11. *As half of the Poolesville site is a former sludge entrenchment site, would there be adequate usable land for one or more driving tracks and the other public safety training functions that are planned for the site?*

Yes, there is sufficient land for the proposed uses at the Poolesville site. Although we are in the preliminary stages of studying the requirements to reuse the former sludge entrenchment site, we believe that we can reuse the area of entrenchment with some additional site preparation.

12. *As the Poolesville site lacks water/sewer infrastructure, would it provide the water supply and drainage necessary to support burn building, driver training tract, and other proposed activities?*

We are very sensitive to the water supply at the Poolesville site. Although no studies or plans have been done yet, we recognize that this is an issue that needs to be carefully reviewed. The solution must not strain the town's water supply. Options we can consider include collecting water from the site and treating it for use, recycling used water and even transporting water during times of drought.

13. *Why has the Executive concluded that the multi-agency driver training track, burn building and classrooms, and other proposed public safety uses are compatible with the county's efforts to maintain a strong agricultural reserve?*

The Executive believes these uses are not *incompatible* with an agricultural reserve. They are extremely low intensity uses – bringing little traffic to the site. The site is already used for some training with the outdoor weapons training facility located there. This use does not remove any agricultural sites from the agricultural reserve and we also see it as a creative and beneficial way to reuse a former sludge entrenchment site without creating much additional burden on the area. The fact that we already own the land makes it an attractive “no cost added” solution for the need as well.

Fire and Rescue

14. *The County Property Use Study proposes building a stand-alone Travilah Fire Station on the current PSTA site. What modifications would have to be made to convert the existing fire station project (designed with living quarters above the PSTA bays) to a stand-alone project? What would be the schedule for completion of the stand-alone station?*

We are developing a PDF for a stand-alone Travilah Fire Station. The new fire station would be a free standing construction with living quarters above the two bays of the stand-alone station. The facility will be designed to have the ability to add an additional bay. Following budget approval, the new fire station could be completed within three years.

15. *The PSTA study proposes relocating the PSTA driving tracks, canine, urban search and rescue, burn building and some classrooms to Poolesville. Please describe the impact of moving each of these elements on MCFRS training activities.*

Generally, moving these resources to Poolesville may have some impact on back-up reflex capability of service in the event back up is required in the general area of the PSTA. These units are not part of the first response but may occasionally be utilized. Relocation would not have a significant impact on day-to-day operations.

Depending upon whether or not older apparatus is maintained at the track for training purposes, there could be additional apparatus fuel costs associated with the longer travel and distance to a training facility in Poolesville. Given that there is no heavy equipment training facility in the County, the provision of a heavy training track will have a positive impact upon the County's training program.

The driver training track, canine facility and urban search and rescue site could be housed at the Poolesville site. They would require limited supporting classroom facilities which have been incorporated into the assumptions in the study. For the Urban Search and Rescue, the deployment model for Federal response could easily be redesigned to provide for the assemblage and dispatch of the Urban Search and Rescue Team from the GE Tech Park building. The response cache and equipment needed for the team is located nearby at Fire Station 31.

Moving the burn building to Poolesville would require that MCFRS modify its approach to training and most likely modify the curriculum to provide classes without hands-on training at the GE Tech Park and mixed classes in Poolesville.

16. *How is the burn building used in day-to-day MCFRS training? How would day-to-day activities have to be modified if the burn building is moved to Poolesville? How would these modifications impact the cost of providing training?*

The burn building is used daily and on weekends for multiple training purposes. Career and volunteer firefighter recruit classes, Aerial Operators' class, Firefighter Safety and Survival

training, mandatory Personal Protective Equipment classes, and In-Service Training programs, all use the Burn Building.

As stated above, day to day training activities would be modified based on the ultimate configuration. Planning for the relocated facilities will address the teaching needs both from the classroom and the practical training session perspective.

17. *How would moving the burn building to Poolesville affect MCFRS volunteers?*

MCFRS has indicated that the majority of the volunteer personnel are in Silver Spring, Rockville, Kensington, Wheaton, Bethesda, Burtonsville and Laytonsville. The identified site is approximately 20 minutes from the current PSTA. Adjustments in planning training delivery can accommodate the new location.

18. *The PSTA is currently centrally located in the County making it possible for units at the PSTA to respond to incidents in a timely manner when necessary. What would be the impact on MCFRS operations if the PSTA classrooms are moved to the GE Tech Park site and several supporting functions are moved to Poolesville?*

Again, MCFRS can modify its training model to support this change. The GE Tech Park site should not have a significant impact on MCFRS operations other than as has already been described.

19. *If it is not feasible to move the burn building or other MCFRS training elements to Poolesville, where else could they be located, and what would be the advantages or disadvantages of these options?*

MCFRS has had discussions with some Council members about the feasibility of finding another site for the PSTA relocation. There are other similar large sites or combinations of sites not in the immediate proximity of residential communities that will continue to be reviewed as possible sites.

Police Department

20. *The Study proposes moving Police Headquarters to the GE Tech Park. Has a Program of Requirements been developed for Police Headquarters? If so, please provide a summary of the functions that will be included, the proposed square footage, and how it compares to the square footage currently allocated at Research Boulevard.*

The police functions anticipated to be included are: Office of the Chief, Community Services, Educational Facilities Officers, Volunteer Resources, Legal and Labor Relations, Media Services, Policy and Planning, Management of Bureaus, Special/Tactical Ops, Criminal Investigation, Pawn, Fraud Computer Crime, Forensics, Crime Lab, Major Crimes, Records, Crime Analysis, Management and Budget, FARU, Automated Traffic Enforcement/Photo Speed Enforcement, Central Property, Personnel, Backgrounds, and Technology. The total usable area

of these spaces is 55,418 sf. This will result in approximately 97,000 gross sf. The current Police HQ building is approximately 40,000 sf. Some of the police functions to be located in the GE Tech Park Building are being consolidated from leased spaces.

21. *Adequate space for the Crime Lab has been a problem for the past few years and impacts the justice system as a whole. Please describe the plans for the Crime Lab and how the plan will address the need for additional space or technology changes that are likely to occur over the next 10 or 15 years.*

The Crime Lab requirement is being re-examined to include provisions for future expansion. The current space is 3,890 usable sf. and the draft POR calls for approximately 12,350 usable sf. Review of the POR may result in additional square footage.

22. *What will the impact be on the training program for Police if the classrooms are separated from the Driver Training Track?*

The plan includes some classroom space to be constructed at Poolesville with the driver training tracks, therefore, there will be no impact from separating them. There will be an impact to the program in that some days, classes will be held at Poolesville and other days at the Gaithersburg location. The tracks will be approximately 20 minutes further than the PSTA site and it is reasonable to expect some marginal cost increases. However, we're already sending officers to the firing range for training and testing and through scheduling we hope to eliminate or minimize such impacts.

23. *The Study proposes moving the District 1 Station from its current location on Seven Locks Road to the GE Tech Park. Chief Manger told the Committee that the move will not only provide an upgraded facility but will allow Headquarters to become a 24 hour facility. However, the GE Tech Park is just barely in District 1 and would be quite a distance from many residences and businesses in the District. What are the service impacts from this relocation? Should consideration be given to establishing a centrally located satellite or sub station? Has the City of Rockville been asked for their reaction to the relocation of the District 1 Station? If so, what were their comments?*

The District 1 Station will be located on the extreme edge of the district that it serves. This will have no impact on officers' effectiveness or the speed of responses because to a large degree, calls are dispatched to officers in their roving vehicles, not from the station. It will be less convenient for residents on the other side of the district to get to the station and in the future we may consider a substation more centrally located. A preliminary conversation has been held with the Mayor of Rockville and a meeting is scheduled for this week with the City Manager. Additionally, the City's police services supplement those of the County and the impacts of the proposed 1st District should not be significant.

Liquor Control

24. *The relocation of the Liquor Warehouse to the Finmarc property appears to be very advantageous. Can this part of the proposal move on a separate track? Does the Executive recommend acquiring the Finmarc property if for some reason the County is not able to acquire the GE Tech Park?*

The acquisition of the Finmarc parcel can proceed on a separate track. The consolidation of the DLC's functions is so advantageous that the Executive would recommend proceeding with this part of the deal regardless of the other elements.

Homeland Security

25. *The PSTA is expected to serve as a central point if mass vaccinations or distribution of medicines are needed in a public health/homeland security situation. Would the GE Tech Park be used for these purposes under the proposed plan? If so, would the road network be able to handle such an event? If not, what alternatives are being considered?*

The GE Tech Park site could serve the function of a distribution site in the event of a public health/homeland security event. The road network should be adequate to handle such an event. Access is available from several vantages -- Great Seneca Highway to I370; Rt. 124 to I270; and Rt. 124 to Clopper Road to I-270. In addition, there is a well-developed network of supporting roads.

To repeat what was said at the outset, it is important to keep in mind that we have consistently advised that the Property Use Study was directed to general feasibility. At this time, we are delving into the details of the PORs, reviewing needs and determining sequencing and space utilizations. With this background, we have responded to your questions generally and in a preliminary fashion. As our work progresses we will be able to provide more detailed and complete responses. My staff is available to work with you and we look forward to providing additional information to the Council as our work on this important initiative proceeds.

cc: Councilmembers
Chief Manger, MCPD
Chief Carr, MCFRS
Joe Beach, OMB
Gordon Aoyagi, DHS
Art Holmes, DPWT
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Diane Schwartz Jones, CE Office